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### PSC 460.01: Human Resource Management

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Political Science 460  
**HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT**  
Spring 2003

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Hours: Anytime I'm not in class.

### **Course Description**

This course introduces students to the field of human resource management. It focuses on the knowledge and skills required by both personnel officers and those who manage personnel on a daily basis.

### **Course Objectives**

1. To acquire substantive knowledge of each major area of human resource management.
2. To develop problem-solving skills relevant to situations faced by managers and personnel officers.
3. To develop technical skills relevant to the effective administration of personnel systems and the effective management of human resources.

### **Required Text**

Jonathan Tompkins, Human Resource Management in Government.

### **Course Requirements**

Students are required to read all assigned readings, be prepared to discuss them in class, take three exams, and submit five writing assignments. Each exam is worth 100 points and the writing assignments 20 points each.

A = 360-400 points (90%)  
B = 320-359 points (80%)  
C = 280-319 points (70%)  
D = 240-279 points (60%)

### **READING ASSIGNMENTS**

Thurs., Jan. 30

An Introduction to the Human Resource Function  
Read Chapter 1 and consider the following:

1. What is meant by the term human resources function and what are its five primary tasks?
2. What is the distinction between line and staff personnel?
3. Why is the relationship between line managers and personnel officers not always harmonious?
4. What are the assumptions of HRM as a theoretical perspective?

Tues., Feb. 4

The Political and Social Environment of HRM

Read Chapter 2 and consider the following:

1. Why is it important to continuously assess factors in your agency's environment?
2. How are HRM policies and practices affected by a) politics, b) changing demographic characteristics, c) technological changes, d) new laws and a greater willingness to litigate, and e) negative public attitudes toward government?

Thurs., Feb. 6

Civil Service Systems and How They are Organized

Read Chapter 3 and consider the following:

1. What is a civil service system?
2. Within a civil service system, what distinguishes the career service from the noncareer service?
3. What distinguishes a rank-in-position career system from a rank-in-person career system?
4. What is a merit system and what are the four traditional merit principles?
5. How is the traditional, highly centralized merit system established and organized?
6. What distinguishes the commission model from the executive personnel office model of organization?
7. Generally speaking, what is the role of the central personnel office in relation to the departmental personnel office?

Tues., Feb. 11

Civil Service Systems and How They are Organized, Continued

**\*\* Assignment #1 due by Tuesday Feb 18\*\***

Thurs., Feb. 13

Societal Values and Civil Service Reforms

Read Chapter 4 and consider the following:

1. When President Washington selected civil servants to fill positions in the new government, what values was he most concerned with?
2. What is a patronage system and what values did Andrew Jackson seek to achieve in adopting it in 1829?
3. The merit system adopted in 1883 sought to achieve what values?
4. How did the scientific management and administrative management movements impact personnel administration?
5. What major changes did the Civil Service Reform Act make, and how did it represent an effort to balance several competing values at once?

Tues., Feb. 18

**\*\*Optional Review for Exam\*\***

Thurs., Feb. 20      \*\*Exam #1\*\*

Tues., Feb. 25      Job Analysis      \*\*Assignment #2 is due on Thursday, Feb. 27\*\*  
Read Chapter 5 and consider the following:

1. What does job analysis entail?
2. What five kinds of information are typically sought and why are they needed?
3. What are the problems or limitations associated with analyzing and describing positions?
4. What techniques are used to obtain job information?
5. When are formal methods of job analysis used, i.e., for what purposes?

Thurs., Feb. 27      Job Analysis      \*\*Assignment #2 is due today\*\*  
Be prepared to do Assignment #3 in class; submit it Tuesday, March 4.

Tues., March 4      Job Evaluation and Pay Systems  
Read Chapter 6 and consider the following:

1. What does job evaluation entail and what is its primary purpose?
2. What are the limitations of job evaluation?
3. How would you describe the point factor method of job evaluation?
4. What is external pay equity and how is it typically achieved?
5. Why is it difficult to maintain internal and external pay equity simultaneously?

Thurs., March 6      Job Evaluation and Pay Systems, Continued

Tues., March 11      Nondiscrimination Approach to Equal Employment Opportunity  
Read Chapter 7 and consider the following:

1. How would you define the concept of EEO?
2. What does the nondiscrimination approach to EEO involve?
3. Title VII of the Civil Rights Act protects individuals on the basis of what five categories?
4. How do job applicants and employees pursue Title VII complaints?
5. How would you define the disparate treatment theory of discrimination? What are some examples of disparate treatment?
6. What is the one legitimate defense for job qualifications that require the successful applicant to be of a particular gender, religion, or ethnic background?
7. How would you define the disparate (or adverse) impact theory of discrimination? What are some examples of disparate impact?
8. What are the facts of the Griggs case and what legal standard(s) did it produce?
9. What is the purpose of the Four-fifths Rule and how is it applied?
10. What should an employer do if analysis reveals that the Four-fifths Rule has been violated?
11. What distinguishes "quid pro quo" sexual harassment from "hostile work environment" sexual

harassment?

12. Why is sexual harassment so pervasive, and why is it so important to address it in the workplace?

13. What is management's responsibility and what is the victim's responsibility in the context of sexual harassment?

Thurs., March 13      Discussion of EEO continued

Tuesday, March 18      \*\*Optional Review for Exam\*\*

Thursday, March 20      \*\*Exam #2\*\*

### **Spring Break**

Tues., April 1      Affirmative Action Approach to Equal Employment Opportunity  
Read Chapter 8 and consider the following:

1. How would you define the affirmative action approach to EEO, and what is its goal?
2. Why did advocates of the affirmative action approach find the nondiscrimination approach to be inadequate?
3. What five affirmative action methods are used, and why are some more controversial than others?
4. What does a court-ordered affirmative action program entail?
5. What employers are subject to Executive Order 11246 and what does utilization analysis entail?
6. What distinguishes voluntary affirmative action programs from other programs, and why do employers establish them?
7. What conditions must be met for the Supreme Court to uphold the constitutionality of voluntary programs?
8. As public policy, why is affirmative action so controversial?
9. Is the merit principle in fact compromised by affirmative action?
10. How are diversity management programs different from affirmative action programs?

Thurs., April 3      Affirmative Action, continued

Tues., April 8      Employee Recruitment and Selection  
Read Chapter 9, prepare answers to the following study questions, and be prepared to discuss Exercise 9.1 (Difficult Issues) in class.

1. What is the fundamental purpose of recruitment?
2. What distinguishes institutional from job-specific recruitment, and what techniques does each type of recruitment use?
3. What are the advantages and disadvantages of internal recruitment for jobs above the entry

level?

4. In what way does selection involve the art of prediction, and what predictive strategy or strategies would you use to select the best performers?
5. How is the pool of qualified job applicants determined?
6. What is the distinction between an assembled and an unassembled examination?
7. Suppose you have four job finalists, what subjective qualities would you look at to ensure a "good fit"?

Thurs., April 10

Employee Recruitment and Selection

Be prepared to do Assignment #4 in class as a group.

\*\* Assignment #4 is due Tuesday, April 15 \*\*

Tues., April 15

Performance Appraisal and Counseling

(Skip Chapter 10) Read Chapter 11 and consider the following:

1. What are the four purposes that performance appraisal systems may be designed to serve?
2. Is it possible, or desirable, to design an appraisal system to achieve all four purposes?
3. What factors tend to undermine the effectiveness of performance appraisal systems?
4. What are the pros and cons of using trait-based, behavior-based, and results-based performance criteria?
5. Which performance appraisal method would you use for white collar professionals, and why?
6. What takes place at the appraisal interview?
7. How is the Problem-solving approach different from the Tell and Sell and Tell and Listen approaches, and what are its advantages?

Thurs., April 17

Performance Appraisal and Counseling

Be prepared to do Assignment #5 in class as a group.

\*\* Assignment #5 is due Tuesday, April 22 \*\*

Tues., April 22

Personnel Policies and Employee Relations

(Skip Chapter 12) Read Chapter 13 and consider the following:

1. What does it mean to take a "strategic approach to policy development"?
2. What roles do policy manuals and employee handbooks perform?
3. What is the advantage and disadvantage of Employee Conduct policies of the kind shown in Exhibit 13.2?
4. What is the philosophy behind progressive discipline, and what steps are typically involved?
5. Disciplinary action is taken in what two kinds of situations, and how are these situations handled differently?
6. Generally speaking, what are an employee's due process rights in a disciplinary situation?
7. What does "just cause" mean?

8. Why is it important to document all rule violations and performance problems?
9. What is an employee assistance program and what is its primary purpose?

Thurs., April 24      Personnel Policies and Employee Relations, continued

Tues., April 29      Collective Bargaining and Labor Relations  
Read Chapter 14 and consider the following:

1. What is the basic model of labor relations established by the NLRA of 1935?
2. What arguments were made against applying the NLRA model to the public sector?
3. How was the NLRA model later modified for use in the public sector?
4. Who typically sits around the bargaining table?
5. What is involved at each of the five stages of collective bargaining?
6. What do grievance procedures typically entail?
7. How would you assess the appropriateness of collective bargaining for public agencies?

Thurs., May 1      Discussion of Collective Bargaining Continued

Tues., May 6      Optional Review for Exam

Thurs., May 8      \*\*Exam #3\*\*

### **Writing Assignments**

#### Assignment #1, The Structure of Personnel Systems, Due Tuesday, February 18

Write a 3-4 page paper (double-spaced) comparing and contrasting the state personnel systems of Massachusetts and Montana on two dimensions: 1) organizational structure (commission, executive office, or integrated model); and 2) extent to which the state has a centralized merit system (clearly stated merit principles; centralized screening, testing and certification according to the rule of three; and specific prohibitions against patronage and political interference).

Deduce answers by visiting each state's website. For Massachusetts, go to [www.state.ma.us](http://www.state.ma.us). Click on Your Government, then State Agencies. 1) Click on "E" and then find the Executive Office for A&F and read about its mission and goals. (You may get routed to "Learn About Governor's Cabinet/State Agencies"). The two agencies you are interested in are organized under this cabinet level department. First, find the Civil Service Commission and read about its history and FAQs. Second, find and read about the Human Resources Division. Figure out how the personnel function is shared between HRD and the Civil Service Commission. When it comes to personnel policies and rules, who performs the legislative, executive, and judicial functions?

2) Go back to the State Agencies page and click on the link on the right side of the page that reads Search the MA General Laws. Click on Link to a Specific Chapter, then type 31 in the

chapter box, and click on Get Link. Click on MGL-chapter 31 - Table of Contents and then read till you bleed. Which characteristics of a centralized merit system are reflected in law?

For Montana, go to [www.montana.gov](http://www.montana.gov). Click on government, then state agencies, then Administration Department (DOA), then State personnel division, which is a unit within DOA. Read about its goals and objectives. Next, go back to the Montana homepage, click on government, then Montana Constitution and Laws. Click on Montana Codes, then Montana Codes Annotated 2001. Go to Title 2 Government Structure and Administration, and then read the first few parts of Chapter 18 State Employee Classification, Compensation, and Benefits. (If state government has characteristics of a centralized merit system you will find them here).

#### Assignment#2, An ADA Analysis, Due Thursday, Feb. 27

Complete Exercise 5.1 on page 96. (two or three pages, double-spaced). Use pages 153-157 as a resource. **Note:** This assignment calls for a PLAN characterized by a series of steps. Don't give me conclusions. Don't tell me what you did do. Explain what you will need to do at each decision step to be in compliance with the ADA. Begin with whether the law even applies to you.

#### Assignment #3, Position Description, Due Tuesday, March 4

Complete Exercise 5.2 (p. 97). Note that the last sentence in Exhibit 5.8 (p. 94) should read as follows: "IV. Job Requirements and Qualifications (list all minimum KSAOs and the means by which they are typically acquired." Note also the advice provided on p. 95.

**\*\*Each student must submit his or her position description separately\*\***

#### Assignment #4, Supplemental Application Form and T&E Scoring Form, Due Tuesday, April 15

You are a department personnel officer. Using the interview technique for conducting job analysis, you recently wrote a position description. You also evaluated the job's worth and assigned it to an appropriate pay grade. You have now received authorization to fill the vacant position. The line manager has asked you to recruit applicants and design a system for evaluating their training and experience. Your assignment is to write a Supplemental Application Form and a T&E Scoring Form similar to those shown in Exhibits 9.4 and 9.5. Keep in mind that years of experience is not always the best indicator that KSAOs are possessed; education and specialized training may be pertinent as well.

Suggestion: Proceed sequentially, listing all required KSAOs before identifying appropriate SAF questions and evaluative criteria. Remember, its training and experience you wish to determine.



Assignment #5, Performance Appraisal Form, Due Tuesday, April 22

You are a department personnel officer. You recently helped recruit and select a new employee. The line manager has now asked you to develop a performance appraisal form that will help her assess the performance of the new employee (no applicable appraisal method is currently in place). You decide to use the critical incident technique of job analysis and to construct appropriate BOS's. Working as a group, and using the critical incident technique (pp. 89-90), identify six behaviors that "define a superior employee" in this position. Next, construct and submit an appraisal form comprised of at least six behavioral observation scales.

This is much harder than it first seems. Some suggestions: 1) Avoid listing traits, KSAOs, or tasks. The idea is to identify discrete behaviors, behaviors that supervisors associate with superior performance. 2) Take a look at Exhibit 11.7, p. 258, but don't plagiarize. Behaviors must be generated from personal observation. 3) Since you are not equally familiar with the position, help the position incumbent identify critical behaviors by asking probing questions.

**Exam Questions**

**Note:** Your grade in the course depends on the quality of your essay responses. Reasoning and logical development are vitally important. Don't respond in a superficial or formalistic manner. Remember to:

- 1) place the essay in an appropriate context by establishing its importance/significance in the introductory paragraph.
- 2) begin each paragraph with a topic sentence borrowed from your essay outline?
- 3) back up your key points with analysis, e.g., by providing examples and explaining the significance of each key point.

Exam #1 (Two questions will be drawn randomly in class)

1. Write an essay demonstrating your understanding of the HR function as a core management function and the partnership that is required between line and staff officers to carry it out.
2. Write an essay demonstrating your understanding of centralized merit systems in terms of both principles and organizational structure.
3. Civil service reforms do not happen by accident; they are products of shifting societal values. Write an essay identifying the key reforms contained in the Civil Service Reform Act of 1978 and assessing whether a proper balance of societal values has been achieved.

Exam #2 (Two questions will be drawn randomly in class)

1. The theory of job standardization holds that jobs should be defined scientifically through careful job analysis, that their worth should be determined scientifically by evaluating job content, and that the job incumbent should be paid according to the demands the job places on him or her. Write an essay demonstrating your understanding of this theory and offering a critique of it. (Note that you will need to draw on more than one chapter).
2. You are the manager of the IT unit in state government and you are having trouble hiring and retaining computer specialists. You want to raise the rate of pay for these positions but find out that it isn't so easy. Write an essay explaining what it is about content-based job evaluation systems that makes your task so difficult, why it is next to impossible for you to maintain both internal and external equity at once, and what you think you should do. Provide examples as appropriate.
3. Define the disparate treatment theory of discrimination as articulated by the courts, provide some examples of disparate treatment, and explain what things a manager should do or not do to reduce the risk of a disparate treatment law suit.
4. Define the adverse impact theory of discrimination and the kinds of situations in which adverse impact is likely to occur. Identify the legal standards articulated in the Griggs decision and explain how to conduct adverse impact analysis, including use of the 80% rule. Also explain your responsibilities as a manager if the 80% rule is violated.

Exam #3 (Two questions will be drawn randomly in class)

1. Explain why it is difficult to predict who will prove to be the best employee from among the many job applicants from which you have to choose. Assuming you are not subject to a centralized merit system, what selection strategies would you adopt and why?
2. Although everyone seems to think that appraising work performance is necessary, rarely do workers or managers feel it is done well. Write an essay describing and justifying the type of system you would put in place as the manager of a bureau comprised mostly of white collar professionals.
3. An employee has reportedly taken a punch at his supervisor. Describe how you will respond in your role as officer manager. Define due process and just cause and explain how you will observe them in considering disciplinary action against this employee.
4. Write an essay describing the NLRA model of collective bargaining and explaining how it has been modified for use in the public sector.